SB471

BILL NUMBER: SB 471 INTRODUCED
BILL TEXT

INTRODUCED BY Senators Romero and Steinberg

FEBRUARY 26, 2009

An act relating to education.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 471, as introduced, Romero. Education: stem cell research.

The California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act, an initiative measure approved by the voters at the November 2, 2004, general election (Proposition 71), establishes the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), the purpose of which is, among other things, to make grants and loans for stem cell research, for research facilities, and for other vital research opportunities to realize therapies, protocols, and medical procedures that will result in the cure for, or substantial mitigation of, diseases and injuries.

Existing law establishes the public school system in this state, and, among other things, provides for the establishment of school districts throughout the state and for the provision of instruction at the public elementary and secondary schools that these districts operate and maintain. Existing law establishes various segments of the higher education system in this state that comprise the public postsecondary education system.

This bill would state findings and declarations of the Legislature relating to stem cell research and science, including the development of the California Stem Cell Education Initiative by the CIRM to educate California pupils about stem cell science and regenerative medicine, and to create pathways for careers in the stem cell industry. The bill would state the Legislature's findings and declarations that all education policymakers, including the State Department of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, and all other institutions of public education, including postsecondary schools, should collaborate to help CIRM advance its education initiatives, as specified.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no. State-mandated local program: no.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) If California is to retain its premier position in stem cell research and fully realize the medical and economic benefits of regenerative medicine, a stronger link is needed between California public schools and this emerging industry.

(b) At the November 2004 statewide general election, California voters approved Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative, which authorizes $3 billion in state bond funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions and added Article XXXV to the California Constitution and Sections 125290.10 et seq. to the Health and Safety Code.

(c) Proposition 71 established a new state agency, the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research and research facilities.

(d) The ballot pamphlet information and finding's and declarations of Proposition 71 described how stem cell research will lead to the development of life-saving regenerative treatments and cures for a

variety of incurable diseases, including cancer, diabetes, heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injuries, multiple sclerosis, and Huntington's disease; and also benefit the California economy by creating projects, jobs, and therapies that will generate millions of dollars in new tax revenues in our state and advance the biotech industry in California to world leadership as an economic engine for California's future.

(e) The public funding of stem cell research, combined with significant private donations, has made California the national leader in stem cell research.

(f) After President Bush limited federal funding for embryonic stem cell research in 2001, most states eliminated or significantly reduced stem cell research.

(g) President Obama is expected to lift the ban on federal funding for stem cell research, which will lead other states to move quickly to try to catch up to California.

(h) Several recent reports have predicted that California will soon face a dramatic shortage of trained professionals to fill jobs in the life sciences sector and a more widespread shortage of college-educated and technically trained workers to meet industry demands.

(i) California's growing gap between supply and demand for college-educated and technically trained workers is exacerbated by an alarmingly high school dropout rate.

(j) Education must be the cornerstone of California's economic development strategy, and education that is closely linked to the needs of emerging industries is critical.

(k) CIRM, in recognition that the rapid progress in stem cell research in California will lead to the development of treatments and cures, to the growth of regenerative medicine and the stem cell industry, and will require an expanding pool of individuals with specialized training and skills, has tentatively made Bridges to Stem Cell Research grants to fund research and training activities for post-secondary students interested in careers in regenerative medicine.

(l) CIRM also is developing a "California Stem Cell Education Initiative" aimed at high schools with the goal of broadly educating California pupils about stem cell science and regenerative medicine and creating pathways for careers in the stem cell industry.

(m) In order to ensure that all California pupils have an opportunity for a career in the stem cell industry and to ensure that California fully realizes the medical and economic benefits of regenerative medicine, all education policymakers, including the State Department of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Secretary for Education, and the State Board of Education, including the board's curriculum advisory commission, and all institutions of public education, including postsecondary schools, California Community Colleges, California State University, and the University of California, should collaborate to help CIRM advance its education initiatives, which may include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

(1) Developing and implementing a curriculum that includes stem cell topics.

(2) Developing and implementing pilot projects related to curriculum and teacher professional development.

(3) Providing high school pupils with laboratory research opportunities.

(4) Conducting outreach programs between high schools and institutions of higher education.

(5) Developing programs in magnet or charter schools with a math-science focus and in partnership academies.

(6) Developing distance learning opportunities using the K-12 High Speed Network.